

## SOME NEW BOOKS.

## The Newer Spiritualism.

The general public, though undoubtedly much interested in psychic phenomena and the inferences to be drawn therefrom, has neither the requisite leisure nor the requisite experience to devote to that intricate subject, which demands prolonged and consecutive study and a complete survey of the field. Therefore we must welcome a volume from such an open-minded and honest expert as the late Mr. Frank Podmore on *The Newer Spiritualism* (Henry Holt and Company), in the full assurance that we may profitably consider his conclusions. At any rate, we shall not thereby err in the direction of overcredulity.

The belief in intercourse with the spirits of the dead, says Mr. Podmore, may be said to begin in modern times with Swedenborg. Prior to him, indeed, alchemists and magicians believed themselves to have opened up communication with the world of spirits; but the entities with whom they came into contact were conceived as of creatures of the elements, or spiritual beings parasitic on mankind. Again, throughout the Middle Ages the faithful found in witchcraft, in epileptic attacks and in various epidemic visitations among religious communities irrefragable proof of spirit intervention. But the spirits concerned in such intervention seem rarely, if ever, to have had a human origin assigned to them; they were regarded not as the souls of dead men and women but as divine emissaries or as ministers of the powers of darkness.

The Swedish seer in his trances, however, professed to speak with the mighty dead of all ages. Trances of like character to his own were found to occur in connection with the practice of animal magnetism; and in the first half of the nineteenth century "magnetic" clairvoyants in every civilized country claimed to hold converse with those who had passed beyond the barrier of death and to reveal the secrets of the spiritual world. As the practice of mesmerism spread it was found that the liability to fall into trances, and with it the power of holding communication with the spirit world, was not a privilege confined, as the Swedenborgians would have it, to a few chosen souls, or even necessarily associated with any marked preeminence in moral or intellectual endowment. The physical manifestations which began in the United States in 1818 with rappings and the like spread to Europe, and for a few years the movement remained at its zenith. Then it rapidly declined, the decline being hastened by the increased attention given by medical men and others to the obscure mental states from which the belief in the first instance had its rise. In the decade of 1880 to 1890 the belief in intercourse with spirits of the dead seemed rapidly approaching its death. The renewed vigor of the movement during the last twenty years is derived mainly from three sources: the trance revelations of the American medium, Mrs. Piper; the physical manifestations of the Italian medium, Eusapia Palladino; and the labors in interpreting and correlating these and other manifestations undertaken by the late Frederick W. H. Myers, the results of which were gathered together in the two massive volumes of his "Human Personality."

In this his posthumous work Myers does not disdain whatever support may be derived from the trance utterances and the physical phenomena. But in both directions the material has been so multiplied since his death that the bulk of Mr. Podmore's book is devoted to its discussion. The nine years which have elapsed since the publication of Myers's work have brought nothing to strengthen his position, declares Mr. Podmore. Briefly, Myers essayed to lift the whole problem of man's immortality to a higher level and propounded an argument of far wider scope, whose cogency we are hardly yet in a position accurately to estimate.

To the older philosophers the mind of man seemed a clear cut, indivisible unity, whose permanences and identity admitted neither doubt nor degrees. To the newer experimental psychology the unity of consciousness is a mere illusion; it is even as the "elementary" nature of air, ether and water, the unreasoned judgment of ignorance. Now, the peculiar contribution of Myers to modern psychology lies here. He fully recognizes and accepts the fact that human consciousness as we know it is a highly composite and unstable thing, having neither completeness nor essential unity. To employ his own simile, consciousness is a selection, like the visible spectrum, accidental, interrupted and variable, from a much larger potential whole. But to the surface consciousness, the only thing we know as consciousness in ordinary life is comparatively unimportant. The subliminal consciousness he supposes may embrace a far wider range both of physiological and of psychological activity than is open to normal personality. Conformably with this view a stream of consciousness flows like an underground river within us; sleep is no longer to be regarded as the mere abeyance of waking activities, but as a phase of personality with characteristics definitely its own. In a clairvoyant vision, the hypnotic trance, hysteria and allied states open a door into the hidden life, and the improvisations of genius are sudden outbursts of subterranean forces. This theory claims to be founded on induction from observed facts.

There are indications, however, Mr. Podmore says, that in its author's mind the conception owed less to induction than to analogy with the states observed in his epileptic patients. In that larger potential consciousness which we have warrant for inferring surrounds the narrowest personality, which offices for our everyday life Myers believed, too largely, discern traces of faculties too large for merely terrestrial needs, and signs of a guiding power with more than human foresight. The argument may be admitted to have cogency if the premises can be established, but apart from certain special cases, and from a few sporadic instances of latent faculties emerging in dreams, or through planchette and the crystal, there is scanty support for the assumption of a hidden personality in man.

There is little evidence, in other words, that in normal persons there is below the surface any sequence of memories or separate form of consciousness so far organized or so stable as to deserve the name of a secondary personality; and there is still less evidence of interference with the operations of the working self by any such subterranean agencies. To put it briefly, the manifestations of the secondary consciousness, automatism, the subliminal self, or whatever else it is called, so far as at present is concerned, cannot be said to adequately support Myers's present position in the terms of physiology.

Myers's present position is concerned in most cases merely with the functioning of lower cerebral centers, or the reactivation of dormant tracts of cerebral tissue. The physical explanation is, of course, largely conjectural, and is apt to fail us just when we need it most. Moreover, it is Myers's contention that the subterranean consciousness contains psychical facts which are not also brain facts, that is, psychical facts which have no correlates in what we know as the material world; and it is easier to appraise the evidence for the existence of such psychical facts than to attempt to prove or disprove the existence of any cerebral processes corresponding with them.

That is the point to which Mr. Podmore now proceeds to direct his argument.

Argument in this region may, no doubt, be helped by analogy. The human mind, then, may be compared with a house, of which consciousness serves as the reception room. At the stage of evolution which reached the single primitive apartment, which served for eating, sleeping and living in, has disappeared, and separate rooms have been assigned for these several functions. In such a house search in the attics or lumber room might bring to light now and again curious and antiquated things, some of them even now good enough for the drawing room. But groping in the dust bin after jewels would be likely to prove unprofitable. And few houses contain a secret treasure chamber. Nevertheless, it is to the kitchen and the dustbin more often than to the treasure chamber that expeditions into the subterranean lead the investigator. When we pass out of the reception room of consciousness we find chaotic memories; definite enlargements of some particular sense; very generally a marked heightening of the pictorial imagination, amounting frequently to hallucination; and, furthermore, the patient in the hypnotic trance often acquires new powers over the organism, insensibility to pain being the most familiar example of this. In all this it is permissible to conjecture that we are reverting to a more primitive stage of consciousness, that we are regaining partial control over organic processes which have long since escaped the guidance of civilized man.

There are other remarkable powers occasionally associated with these subconscious states which are of a more doubtful interpretation. But it is the most dubious matters of all, the supposed existence of a group of transcendental faculties, telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and the like, that Myers in the last analysis based his belief in the soul's immortality. It is hardly necessary to say that these faculties have not yet been admitted to the rights of citizenship in the republic of science, though one of them has filed a petition of naturalization. First, as to telepathy, arguing from experimental results alone, we are not yet justified in claiming for it a transcendental origin, even if we admit it as a fact in nature. For example, in the large class of phenomena of which the common stories of apparitions at the time of death may be taken as the type, the apparition seen is purely subjective; it is only the impulse, arising in a vague, massive feeling of the agent's personality that caused it to be projected, which can claim a source external to the perceiver's mind. Considered by themselves these apparitions hardly carry weight enough to count; it is only because of their presumed kinship with the manifestations of experimental telepathy that they have any claim to be heard at all. But Myers's procedure was to begin the building up of his theory with the more sensational and dubious phenomena and work backward to those which are simpler and better attested. The evidence in the cases of clairvoyance, precognition, retrocognition and other transcendental modes of perception is very much weaker even than for telepathy. Mr. Podmore has examined all the best available evidence for what is called "clairvoyance at close quarters," the vision of objects enclosed in boxes or placed behind screens and so on, and after weighing it he has found it wanting in every case. Sometimes the results might be explained by thought transference; more commonly they are attributable to fraud on the part of the perceiver or to a misconception, common enough in the hypnotic trance, of the source from which he obtained his information. Myers's argument is sound and may ultimately prove fruitful; but the data at present are wholly insufficient and hardly any fresh evidence of these hypothetical powers of the imprisoned soul has been added to his death. Let us admit, says Mr. Podmore, that it is wholly a question of evidence. But so far as the evidence at present goes clairvoyance and precognition are mere chimeras and telepathy may be no more than a vestigial faculty to remind us, like the prehensile powers of the newly born infant, of a time when man was in the making.

In order that the entirely new set of problems (still unsolved) which the last decade has presented us by the physical facts of Eusapia Palladino and the trance utterances of Mrs. Piper may be rightly understood, Mr. Podmore summarizes "the older spiritualism." Few, he says, even of those who believe in the genuineness of Eusapia's feats are now disposed to attribute them to the agency of spirits incarnate. But it is a historical fact that the physical and the psychical manifestations have always been closely associated together; that the peculiar physiological or psychical temperament which has predisposed its possessor to automatic utterance has also commonly predisposed him to move tables and play on musical instruments in the dark. In order to attain something like a proper perspective of Eusapia Palladino's recent feats our author has selected the career narrative of these phenomena in the representative of those phenomena in the history of the subject, as he says, "No well informed spiritualist," he says, "will deny that in Home the case is presented at its best. No medium ever performed more remarkable feats or before witnesses so distinguished and so competent. Further, Home stands alone among physical mediums in that he was never exposed in fraudulent practices."

Mr. Podmore enters somewhat extensively into the life history of Home or Home, as he later preferred to spell his name. It will suffice for our purpose here to mention that apparently a very great share of his success was due to his remarkably pleasing personality. His chief characteristics, says Mr. Podmore, seem to have been a childlike spontaneity, gaiety and frankness and an overflowing warmth of affection for those around him. These qualities, together with the exercise of his wonderful powers, secured him throughout his life the friendship and patronage of many persons of wealth and distinction. He married two wealthy women, among his other achievements; and in 1872, shortly after the second marriage, he retired into private life, broke with most of his old friends, and died in 1886. The engaging personality of the man

constituted a powerful auxiliary to his psychic powers (whatever they may really have been) in that it enabled him to effect that distraction of observers at theatrical moments which is practised by all mediums without arousing suspicion. It is quite possible that his immunity from detection depended largely upon this factor. At any rate, he was blessed with wonderfully suggestive and favorably disposed investigators; so much may be asserted without running the risk of offending the susceptibilities of the most devout believer. He was aided, moreover, by the great wave of exalted emotion, partly religious, which swept through the séance room; the gospel of spiritualism carried men away from their footing on the solid earth.

Fifty years ago very little was known about subconscious mental action and messages coming through automatic writing or from the lips of mediums were accepted at their face value. The seeker often became the prey of his own fond imaginings, the dupe of the self below the threshold. Cunningly phrased spirit messages were part of the stock in trade of all the tribe. But Home overtopped them all to such an extent that we are often compelled to wonder whether he really could on occasion read the minds of his sitters, as Mrs. Piper appears to do now. At any rate Home, moving in his ordinary life as an intimate friend of the persons to whom he gave his séances, had exceptional opportunities of acquiring useful information. If Home were playing a part, it is plain that he never played before. He was an artist, in the common phrase, to the tips of his delicate and all too capable fingers, charming social companion, he won and kept the personal affection and esteem of all those with whom he came into intimate relations, from Lord Adare and Sir William Crookes to Mr. Cox of Cox's Hotel in Jernyn street. "Under the circumstances," comments Mr. Podmore, "it is not to be wondered at that Home was never convicted of trickery. In his capacity of distinguished guest he could not only select his sitters but appoint their place at the table. At this time, in any case, there was little risk of public exposure. The time of swindled muslin, spirit lamps and false beards had yet to come. The practitioners of the period used little apparatus, preferring to rely for their effects on their own deftness of hand and foot, helped by the imagination of their clients." Home was certainly no exception to this rule, declares Mr. Podmore. His manifestations did not altogether escape the challenge of science, however. After narrating the details of an investigation our author sums up the medium's attitude by the remark that by the simple device of doing nothing when the conditions were unfavorable Home could insure that everything should be arranged to suit his purpose, and he possessed this inestimable advantage over the ordinary conjurer that when he was asked to concentrate the attention of the audience on the wrong fact he could fail as often as he wished without discredit. Mr. Podmore's verdict is that it seems possible to explain the great bulk of the marvels recorded to Home by a combination of trickery on the one side and unconscious misinterpretation on the other. Nevertheless it still remains difficult to understand how the investigators of a generation ago could have been deceived, and repeatedly deceived, by devices so crude.

Yet even so, there are a few manifestations witnessed in Home's presence which the hypothesis of simple trickery does not seem to fit. The chief of these marvels, levitation, elongation and the fire ordeal, do not belong to the ordinary repertoire of the spirit mediums then or later. Similar marvels, but Home's were carried to a greater pitch of perfection than his rivals, and exhibited them with greater frequency and with a happy audacity. Home's levitations were of two kinds, the partial and the complete. Of the partial levitations, in which he was raised only a foot or two at most above the ground, we have but few records. Of the complete levitation of the medium, where he was said to be borne to the ceiling, or even in more extraordinary flights, we have numerous accounts, and this phenomenon is one of the most persistently affirmed of all spiritualistic marvels. The most famous incident was when Home was supposed to have gone out of one window and in at another. After analyzing the attendant circumstances and the separate accounts of the three persons who were present, Mr. Podmore arrives at the conclusion that Home found in these young men specially suggestive witnesses, and that what no doubt happened was that Home, having noisily opened the window in the next room slipped under cover of the darkness into the séance room, got behind the curtains, opened the window and stepped on to the window ledge. As for the elongation of Home's body, usually observed in a dim light, but on one or two occasions in adequate light, Mr. Podmore's verdict is that no supernatural explanation would seem to be required. The effect produced on the observers, he says, is often remarkable, he admits, and the illusion, if illusion it were, is not easy to understand. But we have not the necessary data for attempting an explanation. We can only note that the phenomenon was vouchsafed to none but a few specially selected witnesses.

But perhaps the most puzzling of all Home's feats was the fire test. The evidence for this is fairly abundant and of good quality. In one case, for example, Home is asserted to have held his hand over a blazing fire for some time, then plunged it in and drawn out a huge lump of burning coal, so large that he held it in both hands. After standing for about half a minute behind the chair of Mr. S. C. Hall, the husband of the witness, he placed his hand on his head. Some one asked, "Is it hot?" and Mr. Hall replied, "Warm, but not hot." Again, Lord Adare, the present Earl of Dunraven, describes a case in which Home, "kneeling down, placed his face right against the burning coals, moving it about as though bathing in water." Mr. Podmore says that it is not easy to see how simple trickery could explain some of the phenomena attested, in particular an incident quoted from Sir W. Crookes's contemporary notes, which consisted in Home taking a chimney from a lighted lamp, thrusting it into the red hot coals and leaving it there for four or five minutes, and after asking the hostess to test it by applying a match, which instantly ignited, applying his tongue to it. We almost seem to be driven, remarks our author, as Mr. Felding and his colleagues have suggested in their report on Eusapia's manifestations, to accept the alternatives of a new force or a collective hallucination to cover these three acts of phenomena. But if we add all the other phenomena vouchsafed by competent witnesses, including Sir W. Crookes himself, and allow ourselves to be guided by terrestrial analogies at all, we must suppose

that we have to deal not with one new force but with many. We are not justified in doing more than casting a glance at such a possibility before we have at any rate attempted to find a cheaper solution elsewhere.

Now, in all the cases before us we have these two conditions favoring sense deception, an imperfect light and the intention on the part of the performer to mislead. In Home's case, and in most cases of so-called spirit manifestations, we have, moreover, another factor probably more favorable than either of them, the exaltations of the emotions, especially of the religious emotions, as already mentioned; and emotional exaltation is by far the most potent of all the factors in inducing sense deception. Personally Mr. Podmore finds no difficulty whatever in explaining the whole of Home's feats of levitation, whether the Hon. Gordon Eusapia or Stainton Moses, as simply instances of a rather crude sense deception; but he finds more difficulty in applying that explanation to the phenomena of elongation and of the red hot coal performance. We don't quite see how some of the things were done, he concludes, and we leave the subject with an almost painful sense of bewilderment; but to say that because we cannot understand some of the feats therefore they must have been due to spirits or psychic force is merely an opiate for the uneasiness of suspended judgment, a refuge from the trouble of thinking.

The whole subject of Eusapia Palladino, the Neapolitan peasant medium, has been so recently and so exhaustively discussed in the American journals that it is not necessary to devote much space to it here except by way of repetition. Mr. Podmore's conclusions are an indispensable preliminary to considering his discussion of "The Nature of the Problem" and the "Mediumship of Mrs. Piper," and of other persons, and kindred topics which constitute Book II.

The most elaborate investigation of Eusapia's phenomena undertaken by Continental experimenters is that conducted by the Institut Général Psychologique de Paris. Forty-three sittings in all were held in the successive years 1905, 1906, 1907. Of the investigators the best known were M. and Mme. Curie. The verdict of that committee was, in brief, that Eusapia indulged in fraud; but they concluded that this was readily explicable by the circumstance that Eusapia was growing old in view of the fact that she receives gifts, if not always formal payment, constitutes a strong temptation to resort to fraud when genuine powers fail rather than to disappoint her patrons. The committee found that there was a general opinion that Eusapia's phenomena are growing less striking and abundant as the years go on. This opinion Mr. Podmore pronounces to be scarcely justified. Eighteen years ago, he says, as Milan in a circle of scientific investigators Eusapia gave a show certainly no better than her recent performance at the Institut. On the other hand in quite recent years Maxwell, Venzano, Lombroso and other go as you please investigators have got all the phenomena they wanted. While the report of the committee has certainly thrown fresh light on the problem of Eusapia and her performances, it does not furnish the shorthand notes of the séances. Therefore while the committee cannot explain some of the things seen and done they have not given us a chance of explaining them. On the positive side this report does not advance the matter at all, declares Mr. Podmore. Such condensed description as it affords is of just so much value as the ordinary observer's account of a conjuring trick. It tells us only that the witnesses didn't see through the trick; but it doesn't tell us how it was done.

Mr. Podmore next subjects to analysis the doings and report of the committee appointed by the Society for Psychical Research to inquire into the performances of Eusapia. The committee consisted of Mr. Howard Carrington, the Hon. Everard Feilding and Mr. Bagdady, two of whom are practical conjurers and all three of whom have exposed the trickery of mediums. Their practical experience is unrivalled, he says, their record is as nearly as possible perfect; no other record of the physical phenomena of spiritualism is of any value beside it. Yet his analysis demonstrates that the record is at critical moments incomplete and at almost every point leaves obvious loopholes for trickery. The dilemma with which the committee confronted itself, he would almost seem, he is tempted to say, is insoluble; either there was a display of some hitherto unrecognized force or the witnesses were hallucinated. Now, it is clear that this hypothesis of collective hallucination is very much in the air, and Mr. Podmore frankly states that he only puts it forward provisionally. But it is, at any rate, he says, in better case than the hypothesis of a new force. That rests on the sole foundation of sixty years of fraudulent mediumship checked by a few baffling and hitherto unexplained facts like those now under review. It has no analogy and no support from outside. There is one way, and only one way, in which the operation of a new force in this dubious case of a healthy body of art, the satisfaction of sober minded men. When Sir W. Crookes was about to undertake a similar investigation he indicated the principles which should guide scientific research in this field: "The spiritualist tells of flowers with fresh dew on them, of fruits and living objects being carried through closed windows and even solid brick walls. The scientific investigator naturally asks that an additional weight (if it be only the thousandth part of a grain) be deposited on one pan of his balance when the cases is locked. And the chemist asks for the thousandth of a grain of arsenic to be carried through the glass tube in which pure water has been hermetically sealed." Mr. Podmore sums up the matter as follows: "Let renewed and again renewed attempts be made to procure physical effects under automatic check and automatically recorded, and until success is obtained let us leave Eusapia in a decent obscurity."

He adds a brief postscript about the interesting exposure of Eusapia's methods in New York last December, declaring that the result merely confirms the view he has set forth.

Book I, having been devoted to a consideration of whether the phenomena of spiritualism are tricks and illusions, or proof of a supernatural agency, Book II enters upon a region where the problems presented are much more complex, so complex, indeed, that there seems little likelihood, says our author, of a final solution being attained in this generation. And the question of fraud, apart altogether from ethical considerations, assumes considerable importance. Mr. Podmore begins by stating as emphatically as possible that it seems to him incredible

that fraud should be the sole explanation of the revelations made in trance and automatic writings. But that fraud, or what would in ordinary circumstances be called fraud, plays some part in the results he does not doubt. The word "fraud" is not happily chosen; play acting or make believe would more nearly express, in typical cases, the meaning to be conveyed. A trance medium is, ex hypothesi, in an abnormal condition; and there are other indications that the dissociation of consciousness frequently involves impaired moral control. In using the word "fraud" therefore in this connection we do not necessarily imply a higher degree of moral responsibility than when we pass judgment on the play acting of a child. Conjurings tricks and sham telepathy seem to be merely a part of the automatic romance.

It is easy to recognize the probability of such an explanation in the case of many German sonnambules, sickly neurotics whose physical instability was accompanied by or perhaps rather based upon serious physical deficiencies and anomalies. It is more difficult to apply the same measure to the case of a highly educated and apparently healthy and normal Englishman like Stainton Moses, who was a graduate of Oxford, for some years a clergyman of the Church of England and English master in University College School. In the prime of life he developed into a spirit medium of the most advanced kind, wrote "inspirational" discourses, published books and delivered messages purporting to come from the dead. Most of his clairvoyant revelations can be shown to be reproductions of recent obituary notices in the newspapers and other published material. The few instances which have not yet been traced to such readily accessible sources cannot certainly be relied upon as indicating supernatural faculty. Mr. Podmore's view of Moses's physical phenomena is that the latter enforced the lessons of inspirational sermons by means of parlor tricks passing as miracles. In any case he was abnormal, either as being possessed of non-normal powers as a physical medium or psychically so that he was enabled to reconcile his speech with his actions.

Our author sums up the whole matter, both as regards the professional mediums and the chief private clairvoyants and automatists who have placed their services gratuitously at the disposal of the Society of Psychical Research in these terms: The presumption of honesty based upon the character and conduct of waking life counts for nothing in the case of a medium who is liable to pass into spontaneous trances. For the upper consciousness, the primary personality, the real self, the man or woman whom we regard as a healthy, who lives a sane and healthy life among men and women like himself, who does his day's work and fulfills his social duties, this familiar person is not responsible for the words spoken by his mouth or for the writing produced by his hands in the trance. Writing and speech are the work of some other intelligence. In most cases that other intelligence is unquestionably of the same substance as the primary consciousness; it is either a maimed and mutilated form of it or an allotropic modification of it. But this secondary self, or personified subconsciousness, is a being of marked characteristics, which display a curious uniformity, notwithstanding the numerous diversities between the primary selves of the subjects. To begin with, the trance personality is commonly non-moral in the sense that many children and some savages are non-moral. It has few scruples. It shows little desire, perhaps has little aptitude, for distinguishing between fact and fiction; it has a childlike zest for make-believe, a childlike spontaneity of dramatic faculty and uses whatever material it can find or invent to support its self-suggested phantasies. It presents us, in a word, with the extreme example of art for art's sake. Its motive force appears to be a childlike vanity which will not permit it to say "I don't know," but prefers any kind of disingenuous evasion to a plain confession of ignorance. Again, this dream self, which awakens when the true self is asleep, has some faculties very much alive. It frequently shows an abnormal cunning in fishing for information and marvellous ingenuity in piecing together the scraps so gained. To this must be added that in many cases we have in the utterances of the secondary self proof which it is almost impossible to gain away from a healthy body of art, this uncanny monster can on occasion read the secret thoughts of those who consult her as an oracle.

After analyzing the mediumship of the well known Mrs. Piper and of Mrs. Thompson, who aided the P. R. S. with her powers, Mr. Podmore directs his attention to some more obscure communicators, to include Edmund Gurney, F. W. H. Myers and Dr. Richard Hodgson, who intimately connected with the society. It would be natural to expect spirit communication from these men if such messages were possible after death. As a matter of fact messages have been received, especially since the death of Myers, but as the main facts of the lives, the personal relationships, the published works and the mental antecedents generally of these men are known to the trance intelligence, the region known to the medium is very much narrowed, and the opportunities for test questions are proportionately reduced. Undoubtedly the best results have been obtained from Hodgson. Taken as a whole, says our author, the correspondences (in a séance which he reproduces in detail) are so numerous and precise and the possibility of leakage to Mrs. Piper through normal channels in many cases is so effectively excluded that it is impossible to doubt that we have here proof of a supernatural agency of some kind either telepathy by the trance intelligence from the sister, or some kind of communication with the dead. But the dramatically true incidents given in a manner unlike any else are diluted with a very large amount of inferior matter. The Hodgson control makes many incorrect statements and endeavors to conceal his mistakes by apparently disingenuous evasions. He has promised to reveal the key to the cipher in which many of the private papers left behind him by Hodgson are written, but he has not done so. It will be seen that the problem of proving the authenticity of the alleged communications from the dead is by no means a simple one.

The same may be said for the experiments known as "cross-correspondences," in which three mediums, separated by such distances as India, England and Italy, were employed in a combination. Some of the correspondences are striking, although the careful study of an expert is generally required to set forth the allusions of the utterances to those of the cooperating medium or mediums. Mr. Podmore declares that the coincidences of thought and expression in a series of sittings participated in by Mrs. Piper,

Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland are too numerous and too detailed to be accounted for by chance. Even the casual reader will be surprised by them, we may remark. Whatever interpretation may be given to these curious writings, we are forced to recognize, says Mr. Podmore, something extraordinary to be explained. It may ultimately be proved that there is no indication of postmortem agency, but to prove that it is necessary to assume the action of living minds upon one another of an unprecedented kind. From every point of view these remarkable records are worthy of careful study.

Among the most recent evidence are characteristic utterances ascribed to Myers by the medium (Piper) which displayed an intelligence and in many particulars intimate knowledge of some of the classical poets, especially of Ovid and Virgil—a knowledge which far exceeded that of his interlocutor who had arranged the sittings with Mrs. Piper. This Mr. Dorri did not think that the trance consciousness was able to tap his mind for facts and thoughts and rarely if ever got subliminal impressions from his mind; and indeed he found many of the allusions during the sittings unintelligible at the time, while others which were in accordance with the legends appeared to him incorrect.

Another interesting evidence which led to a very curious result is that known as "The Seven's Incident." Six different automatic writers produced in their script the cross-correspondence represented by the word "seven." This was in April, 1909. Apparently there was no great mystery involved; but a Mr. Piddington, who has done invaluable work in deciphering these correspondences and in hunting down obscure allusions, furnished the clue to the puzzle and incidentally exploded one hope which the Psychical Researchers had been relying upon for evidence of life after death. It will be remembered that the society has urgently requested for many years past that investigators should send to the headquarters in London a sealed letter whose contents, known to the writer alone, shall be of such a nature that the accurate transmission through a medium after the writer's death may serve as a convincing testimony to the possibility of other world communication. Now Mr. Piddington on July 12, 1904, had written such a "posthumous" letter, which had been duly sealed and deposited at the rooms of the society. When he heard of this cross-correspondence "seven" he opened that letter in the presence of Miss Johnson (who edited Myers's great work) and it read in part as follows: "If ever I am a spirit and if I can communicate I shall endeavor to transmit in some form or other the number seven. \* \* \* I should try to communicate such things as 'The seven sleepers of Ephesus,' 'Unto seventy times seven,' 'We are seven,' etc." Two of the seers reproduced, "We are seven," one got seven in combination with seventy-seven, and there were other correspondences of a highly interesting though indirect nature.

It seems hardly possible to doubt, declares Mr. Podmore, that the idea of "seven" which runs through all the automatic utterances was derived ultimately from Mr. Piddington's mind. On the other hand the posthumous letter left by Hodgson proved to be when unsealed absolutely unlike the communication which purported to come from him in the spirit world. Speaking of Mr. Piddington's letter, our author says that whatever the explanation of this particular series of coincidences he sees no evidence whatever to justify the assumption, even provisionally, of a direct intelligence other than those of the automatists concerned. It would appear, on the contrary, that this case has important bearings upon the interpretation of the evidence as a whole. Not only does it indicate in the least equivocal fashion the action of telepathy from the living to the dead, but it further invalidates by anticipation all the evidence for the agency of the dead which might have been derived from the posthumous letters and has thus deprived us of what would have seemed an important though not of course a crucial test.

Our author deems it important to consider what may be called the machinery of the trance communications—the "controls" of the medium and says that in cases of secondary personality and so forth the new consciousness is apt to assume a new name. There can be no question in most cases that the assumption of a new name is merely, so to speak, a kind of illegitimate inference drawn by the transformed consciousness; it feels itself a new creature and demands therefore a new name. There is no reason to doubt that the medium's mind, or the fashionable in America, or the aristocratic circles—and the names of the mighty dead also affected in these circles were wholly the creations of the medium's dream consciousness. In some persons of mental instability such dreams may even take possession of the waking organism. There are abundant indications that the trance communications of the later mediums—Mrs. Piper and those of her class—are all of the same fundamental kinship. When the communications are oral "fishing" for material is always present. Now that nearly all Mrs. Piper's communications are written instead of being delivered orally opportunities of this particular kind which prompted Prof. Shaler to designate the "control" "Dr. Phinist" (a preposterous accident) are necessarily more restricted, but they still occur. For though the writing can be by those who are conversant with it be deciphered without serious risk of ambiguity, it is by no means easy to read, and this leaves it open to interpretation to give a hint of the answer desired. But the whole machinery of communication as interpreted to us by the controls is directly productive of ambiguities of many kinds. The whole elaborate machinery of control has the effect, whether designed or not, of not only of increasing the uncertainty of interpretation and affording a cloak for mistakes, but Mr. Podmore's conclusion is that there is very strong prima facie presumption that all the personalities claiming to communicate through Mrs. Piper and other automatists proceed from the same manufactory. In fact the investigators themselves now recognize that the primitive theory of possession, the theory advocated in a modified form by Dr. Hodgson and still held by most spiritualists, can no longer be defended. If these impersonations are not what they pretend to be they are shams and we are faced with a gigantic system of make-believe. The automatist without reproach is not yet been found. All alike, it would seem, are impostors. It is out in weaving their dream romances, the automatists, he thinks, unquestionably show that they possess information which could not have reached their consciousness by normal means, and it is in tracing this information to its source that the

main interest of the inquiry and the main burden of proof will be found. Whether the faculty of supernatural perception constitutes a real difference between Mrs. Piper and the majority of her predecessors it is difficult to say.

The analysis of cases where information unknown to the sitter was given by the trance intelligence scarcely adds strength to the hypothesis of spirit control. In every case the information given was or may have been within the knowledge of some living mind. In many cases the circumstances point to some form of telepathy between the distant agent and the trance intelligence, mediated, as it would seem in all cases, by the presence of a common acquaintance in the person of the sitter. That a disembodied spirit should be able to read the mind of a living person at a distance can only seem more probable because we know nothing about disembodied spirits and our fancy is free to do what we please with any powers we choose, whereas we do know, or think we know, the limitations of our poor human faculties. The most promising line of inquiry at the present time would seem to consist in the possible indications of a directing and organizing intelligence to be found by careful comparison of the scripts of several automatists. But if a final verdict must be deferred until further investigation shall have enlightened our ignorance and shall enable us to give a decisive answer to the question whether these dark sayings proceed from the dead or the living, we may recognize at once that there are other if perhaps less momentous issues involved, which concern our interests. No person who carefully studies the records would think it possible to attribute all these numerous and well attested coincidences to fraudulent design. If we reject, for the present at any rate, the explanation suggested by many of the utterances themselves, that of communication from the dead, we must seek for some other cause adequate to the effects. There remains only the agency which has been provisionally named telepathy, but which no one has yet ventured to define in other than a speculative fashion as communication apart from recognized sensory channels. The establishment of such a faculty, if only as the vestige of a primitive mode of sensibility, now superseded by articulate speech, would surely be a result worth all the labor spent, a reward which would go far to compensate for the loss of that perhaps visionary goal.

## POPE'S GROTT.

The Decorations Were Contributed by Friends and Admirers.

From the London Chronicle.

Pope's villa at Twickenham, which is now to let, was the scene of the happiest years of the poet's life. Pope was at least as vain of his prowess as an artificial gardener as he was of his poetry.

He spent years in the elaboration of his grotto. "I am as busy in three inches of garden," he wrote to Lord Strafford in 1725, "as any man could be in the most fertile field." Indeed, he told the story of his life in cutting the twelve Apostles on one cherry stone. I have a theatre, an arcade, a bowling green, and what not, in a bit of ground that would have been but a patch of waste before the first day of the year was turned to grass.

The grotto is the subject of one of the most typically grandiloquent passages in the writings of Samuel Johnson, who remarks that the poet, "being under the necessity of making a society public passage to a garden on the other side of the world, adorned it with fossil bodies and dignified it with the title of a grotto; a place of silence and retreat from which he endeavored to persuade his friends and himself that care and passions could be excluded. A grotto is not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than exclude the sun, but Pope's excavation was requisite as an entrance to his garden; and as some men try to be proud of their defects, he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience and vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage."

The grotto must have had strong claims upon its owner's regard, for it was a shrine of friendship, and the decorations were contributed by friends and admirers. The Duchess of Cleveland presented clumps of amethyst and pieces of spar. Dr. Borlase, the Cornish antiquary, sent native diamonds and ores. Lytelton procured red spar from Leadhill, and sent a piece of a bone, especially brought from Mount Vesuvius and fragments of marble from the grotto of Karia; Gilbert West sent petrifications. Sir Hans Sloane some fine fragments of basalt from the Giant's Causeway, while the Duke of Devonshire presented a piece of native Egyptian gold ore from Peruvian mines, pebbles from Brazil, coral, humming birds and exotic flowers and shrubs.

Byron and Greece.

From the London Times.

The anniversary of the famous sortie from Missolonghi, perhaps the most brilliant episode in the war of Greek independence, is celebrated at all the houses of M. Venizelos, the Prime Minister, who, accompanied by M. Stratos, the President of the Chamber, arrived this morning from Athens. Large crowds from the neighboring districts flocked into the town, which is now a city of 100,000 inhabitants, and presents a most animated appearance.

Shortly before noon after service in the Cathedral a procession in which the Archbishop and clergy and a large number of military and naval officers took part advanced through the streets of the city, the environs, which contain a tumulus, beneath which the defenders of the town lie buried, and the tomb of Mark Botzaris. Close by is the statue of Byron and the spot where, according to local tradition, the heart of the poet was buried. Here another service was held and some speeches were delivered, after which M. Stratos in the name of the Greek Chamber laid wreaths on the tumulus and on the statue of the poet.

In the afternoon the Prime Minister visited the site of the grotto, where Byron died. The building has long since disappeared and the desolate spot has been invaded by the waters of a neighboring lagoon. The Government proposes to enclose the site and to erect a tablet here to the memory of the poet.

## An Author's Handwriting.

From the London Chronicle.

The handwriting of literary men is supposed to have improved during recent years, but there are still a few with a fondness for higgledy-tiggledy. At a meeting of the Oxford Conference in Edinburgh the other day the Rev. Dr. Fitchett, author of "Deeds That Won the Empire," and other popular works, handed up a resolution. The president looked at it, turned it upside down and round, and at length gave it up in despair. "It was equally unable to decipher it. 'I must ask Brother Fitchett,'" said the president, "to be good enough to rewrite his resolution and try to make it readable. At present it resembles a doctor's prescription."

## Following a Precedent.

From the Gentleman.

Writes a friend from Cannes: "I heard a story the other night at a dinner given by a friend, which I believe, a true one, and it is a little bit of a mystery. It was told by a man who wished to give a Bible to his mother on her birthday, and before writing her name on the flyleaf he took down a book from her shelf to see the proper way of setting about the matter. Literally he wrote 'With the kind regards of the author'—"